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AL-TN Association Meeting 2011



The Alabama-Tennessee Association
Alabama-Tennessee Association Holds
Annual Meeting Hosted by Pilgrim
Congregational UCC, Chattanooga
On Friday May 13 and Saturday May 14,
the Alabama-Tennessee Association
gathered under the leadership of their
retiring moderator Don Clark. The event
was organized around the theme of
exploring restorative justice, and Sala
Nolan of Justice and Witness Ministries of

the UCC was a keynoter. The meeting also had workshops on subjects of the
Tennessee Death Penalty, Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, Gender, Race and
Incarceration, and Torture in our Time.

Following a time of active engagement
with the issues, the Association gathered
to conduct business, electing Gary
Meyers, pastor of Trinity Congregational
UCC, Athens, AL as their new moderator.
They passed a resolution advocating for
reform in the criminal justice system and
affirming restorative justice principles.

Debbie Spearman, who attended the AL-
TN meeting, reported on the workshops
that took place.

1. **Female Incarceration and What We Can Do About It** by Rev. Sala W. J. Nolan Gonzales, Minister of Criminal Justice and Human Rights of the UCC. Sala outlined her experiences working within the penal system, especially with female prisoners.
2. **Broken Beyond Repair:** The Reality of Tennessee's Death Penalty by Denver Schimming, member at Holy Trinity Community Church UCC in Nashville, is the Field Organizer for Tennessean's for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. Denver shared the facts about the failures of the system but also related personal stories of families of victims as well as those executed. He gave examples of how everyday citizens can get involved to change the current system.
3. **Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program:** Providing Healing and New Life for Victims and Offenders by Rev. Leonard Stark, President and founder of the Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP). Rev. Stark is a retired UCC pastor and member of Pleasant Hill Community Church in Tennessee. The program of Cumberland County Tenn. is 22 years old. Mediation is the central focus through face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders in court-referred cases. The success of the Mediation helps keep many out of the penal system and provides peaceful resolution to their conflicts.



UCC News

UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United
Church of Christ

A 'Just Peace' future: Part 2

Following the recently
concluded World Council of
Churches' International
Ecumenical Peace Convocation
held in Kingston, Jamaica,
United Church News asked
Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite to
reflect on the history, progress
and potential future of the Just
Peace movement.



4. Torture in Our Time:

Preventing Torture Everywhere by Rev. Don Smith and Rev. George Hartz. Rev Smith and Rev. Hartz are officers of Action by Christians Against Torture – USA (TN). Rev. Smith presented the



International agreements that deal with torture and how the United States is choosing not to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.

The AL-TN Church and Ministry Committee has taken the following actions:

- Renewed the licenses to minister to the following:
Cindy Andrews-Looper, pastor, Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville
Michael Garrett, pastor, First Congregational UCC, Montgomery
Reginald Holloway, pastor, First Congregational UCC, Talladega.
- Transferred the Ordained Ministerial Standing of Chrissie Cataldo, a member of Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville, to Eastern Association, Illinois Conference.
- Voted to grant Ecclesiastical Endorsement to Lillian Hallstrand Strahine in APC. Lillian is a chaplain at Vanderbilt Hospital and a member of Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville.
- Voted to grant member in discernment status to Scott Williamson, a member of Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville and appointed Robert Hurst, the pastor of United Church of Huntsville, Alabama as his adviser.
- Voted to grant privilege of call to Linda Miner, associate pastor at Pilgrim UCC, Birmingham.

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